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Senator Blasts Pentagon and CIA

Minnesota's McCarthy Author of Critical Book

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Written for The Herald-News
And Chicago Daily News

WASHINGTON— We think of the State Department as the agency that conducts our foreign affairs.

But a tremendous amount of that business is directed by the Defense Department and the Central Intelligence Agency. The State Department seems a little removed from every day life. But Defense and the CIA are even more remotely removed.

This is one of the sober thoughts that come from "The Limits of Power," written by Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy of Minnesota, and published last week by Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

McCarthy, a Democrat, writes the way he talks, always in a soft key and generally in the form of understatement.

The main theme of the book is that we have ignored the limits of our power in making our foreign commitments.

"AMERICA'S contribution to world civilization must be more than a continuous performance demonstration that we can police the planet," McCarthy concludes. He pointed out that earlier empires in Greece, Rome, Spain, France

and Britain learned that lesson the hard way.

But the chapters that shook this reader were the ones devoted to the Defense Department and the CIA.

Through our military assistance program, which is directed from the Pentagon, in close co-operation with the arms industry, the United States has become the world's greatest supplier of arms.

The Pentagon brings thousands of foreign military experts here for training. This has established a spiritual liaison between the U.S. military and the colonels who periodically overthrow a constitutional government in Latin America and other parts of the globe.

McCARTHY believes that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which he is a member, should give increasing attention "to the desirability, and the very morality, of our arms distribution program."

The senator reminds us that the CIA, through its "operational functions," has come a long and questionable way from 1947, when it was established by the national security act "for the purpose of co-ordinating intelligence activities."

The recent revelations of the infiltration of colleges, student organizations, and trade unions by the CIA lends substance to McCarthy's suggestion that Congress should exercise more supervision over this secret agency.

In his discussion of the CIA, McCarthy recalls that the American people have never been informed of the real reason for the untimely flight of the U-2, which the Russians shot down on the eve of the meeting between President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Premier Nikita Khrushchev. Neither have we ever had answers to the many questions raised about the role of the CIA in the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

It is interesting that in this period, when our statesmen are looking for fat to cut in the federal budget, we don't have the slightest public idea of the annual secret appropriations for the CIA.

If McCarthy's quiet skepticism should spread among his colleagues, they might look to see if they couldn't save money at the CIA.

Someone should leave marked copies of the "The Limits of Power" on all the desks in the Senate chamber.

This article also appeared in the Fargo, North Dakota Forum for October 10, 1967

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